

# CASTLE HNOJNÍK AS A LANDSCAPE FORMING ELEMENT

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**Abstract.** *The article is focused on the history and building development of the Hnojník castle and its neighbourhood. Especially the urban changes are observed. The basis of this article comes from the Historic Building Investigation of the Hnojník castle.*

## Keywords

*Castle, municipality of Hnojník, renaissance, baroque, classicism, man-made landscape.*



Fig. 1: Castle Hnojník, the south façade, photo, 2020.

## 1. Introduction

Hnojník Castle is an important part of the manmade landscape in the Těšín region and their neighbourhood. Unfortunately, the castle has not been used probably for 20 years. In 2019 the building was bought by PRIGO Group, a company running private schools. The company began the restauration and adjusting the building to teaching purposes. In 2020 the design was completed and the restauration was prepared. The building archaeology

survey from 2001 [2] was updated [3].

The first founding report [3] brought many new data about history of the castle and its neighbourhood. The second founding report was formed as an inventorying of the precious building elements in the castle [4].

The aim of this article is to present history of the castle Hnojník in short, to point out the new connections and to notice and describe the influence of this castle on the shape of a landscape in the castle's neighbourhood.



Fig. 2: Hnojník, 1st military survey, Section 13, 1764–1768. [www.oldmaps.geolab.cz](http://www.oldmaps.geolab.cz)

## 2. Hnojník – the Demesne and the Residence

The oldest mention of Hnojník comes from the list of the tithes for the Wrocław diocese from 1305 [14]. Hnojník was the centre of the demesne from 1445 [13]. A name of Stašek of Hnojník was written in 1483 [20]. At that time Hnojník became the direct property of the prince of Těšín. Fortified house Hnojník was probably built then. Fortified houses were usually built after demesnes were founded (the town fortified house in Klimkovice, built by the Bítov family of Bítov, the country fortified house in Rychvald, built by the Bárský family of Baště). The prince of Těšín Kazimír II gave the fortified house Hnojník in pledge to Jan Bruzovský after 1500. Then Hnojník was given in pledge to Erazim Gellhorn of Bankovice.

Before 1550s the Tluk family of Tošanovice gained the fortified house Hnojník [5]. Zikmund Tluk of Tošanovice sold the fortified house Hnojník to Václav Pelhřim of Třenkovice (Třenovice/Třánkovice) for 550 thalers in 1550 [17] and [9]. The family of Pelhřim of Třenkovice were quite a rich family. They had property in the whole Těšín (Teschen) region. They also owned Dolní Soběšovice, Šumbark, Horní Bludovice, Koňákov and Domaslavice [19]. The Tluk family were Lutherans and they probably supported the Lutheranism in Hnojník. The parish house in Hnojník was entrusted to the Lutheran pastor in 1556 [19]. In 1613 Václav Senior Pelhřim of

Třenkovice sold Hnojník and Rakovec to Kašpar Marklovský of Žebrač for 8000 thalers. In 1625 Kašpar Marklovský was dead. The guardians of his underage daughter had to rent the farm Hnojník as we can read in the contract between the guardians and the mother, Dorota née Macák of Ottenburk, widow of Kašpar [23]. We do not know exactly, when Wildau of Lindenwiese gained the farm Hnojník. The Wildau family of Lindenwiese was recently elevated to the nobility. Ondřej Wildau, merchant from Toszek, gained burgher right in Těšín on 10 December 1639. He was elevated to the nobility in 1661 [19]. As Pilnáček wrote, Ondřej Wildau of Lindenwiese, Hnojník and Rakovec (1612–1696) had a tombstone in the church in Hnojník [19]. Ondřej Wildau and his son Franz Albrecht signed the urbarium that dates back to 1692 [24]. Based on this urbarium, in view of the range of villeins' duties, A. Grůza deduced that manorial lords had one of their residences in Hnojník [2].

František Albrecht Wildau of Lindenwiese sold Hnojník and Rakovec to Karl Wenzel Bees von Chrostina († 1754) in the year 1736 [23]. Karl Wenzel had his residence in Hnojník [9] and [26]. He died in 1754. His testament from July 7, 1753 says, that the widow got property Hnojník and Rakovec, the best brougham with the four horses and necessary harness for untiring care. [26]. From 1754 to 1761 the widow Karolina Bees owned Hnojník, then Georg I Free Lord von Bees von Chrostina 1761 till 1785. Georg II Otto Free Lord von Bees von Chrostina (1750–1819), married to Marie Anna von Wipplar (1754–1814), took over the property in 1790.



The information on the form of castle Hnojník can be found in the inventory from 1804: In the village Hnojník /Hnoynik/ there is a manorial castle, localie (a kind of a

parish house), church, school, demesne farm, brewery and 5 mills [10].

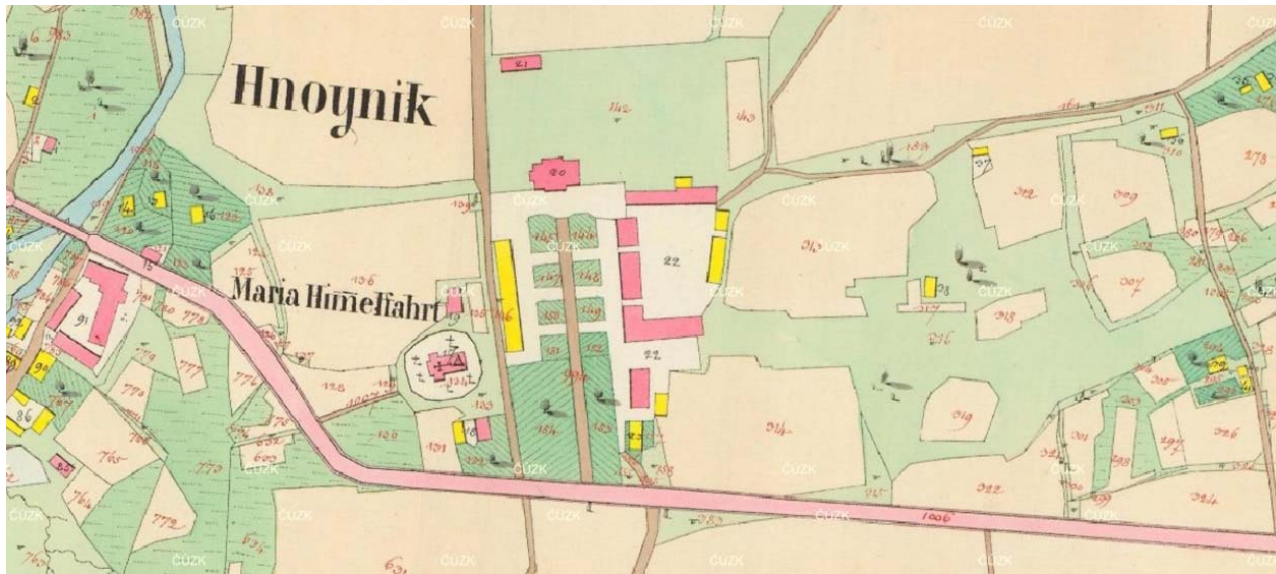


Fig. 3: Hnojník, Stable cadastre, 1836. Central archive of geometry and cadaster.



Fig. 4: Hnojník, cadaster map, 1907. Provincial Archive in Opava.

In 1819 Georg III Friedrich Free Lord von Bees (1779-1836) took over Hnojník, Rakovec a Horní Tránovice in accordance with the last will of his father, who owned this property probably till 1836. He was married to baroness von Mattencloit.

Georg III Friedrich died in 1836. The property was administered by his widow, baroness von Mattencloit.

Georg the IV Bees (1824–1905) took over his inheritance in 1845. He got married to Stephanie, the daughter of knight von Wachtler who owned the demesne

in Steiermark [18].

The year when the burial chamber of Bees in Hnojník was constructed is not sure. Many authors state the year 1868, the others 1860 [25].



**Fig. 5:** Hnojník, the detail of the postcard, 1899, Ostrava Museum.

The date when the castle was reconstructed is known exactly neither. Even though earlier years can be found in literature, the most important source of information is a postcard with a picture of the south façade dating back to 1899 [22], in which the castle still with attic roofs can be seen.

George V Bees von Chrostina (1848–1930) took charge of the demesne in 1905. A collection of photos taken during the visitation of the president Masaryk in Hnojník on 6 July 1930 dates back to his time. George V died unmarried and childless.



**Fig. 6:** Hnojník, the detail of the postcard, 1899, Tomáš Peterek's private collection.

The rest of manor farm estate Hnojník – Třanovice was taken over by his brother Josef Bees-Chrostina (1861–1934). Four years later, in 1934, he died in Wien. His son Johann Nepomuk von Bees was the nephew of George V and Josef. Georg VI baron Bees - Chrostina (1880–1955). Vilemína von Bees, née Faust (1865–1936), the widow of Josef Bees-Chrostina, had a right to use the castle till the end of her life. She inherited all the furniture and the other chattels. She did not live much longer than her husband.

The manor farm was hired to Antonín Macek in 1934. In 1940 the manor farm was entrusted to H. Klingermann from Berlin. He stayed there till 1945. The German

commandership had their seat there in the last year of the Second World War [21].



**Fig. 7:** Hnojník, park southwards from the castle, at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s. Tomáš Peterek's private collection.

After the Second World War the manor farm of George VI von Bees-Chrostina was confiscated according to president's decree from 1945. It was entrusted to District committee's in Český Těšín. National enterprise Czechoslovak State Woods Prague got Hnojník in 1949. Then the State Farm Enterprise Hnojník got the castle in 1968. A part of the castle movables was transported to castle Šternberk in Moravia [16] and the other part of movables became the part of the Silesian Land Museum in Opava.



**Fig. 8:** Hnojník, park southwards from the castle, at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s. Tomáš Peterek's private collection.

The library with 750 books was also transported to Šternberk in Moravia then it became part of other collections [1].





Fig. 9: Hnojník, south façade, postcard, 1928. Tomáš Peterek's private collection.

### 3. The Neighbourhood of the Castle

It is convenient to characterize the neighbourhood of the castle in order to monitor the evolution of manmade landscape in Hnojník. Northeastwards there is big ground unevenness. Eastward concrete basements have been found. The ground unevenness northeastwards is completely covered with the earth and grown trees.

Eastwards there is a large farm (former demesne farm) with new and original old buildings. The location of the demesne farm was drawn on the map of stable cadastre as early as in 1836.



Fig. 10: Hnojník, the neighbourhood with the under terrain rest, southern hornbeam avenue, photo, 2020

The sculptor's artefacts (decorative vases, putti, the statue of the St Johann Nepomuk, an obelisk in front of the southern façade and both statues – Our Lady (probably of Sorrows) and St. Florian) have been removed. Some of those artefacts were probably stolen and the others were driven to the restauration workroom of sculptor Kuchař in Vělopolí.

### 4. The Building Evolution of the Castle and its Neighbourhood

Present literature states castle in Hnojník to be a newly-built Baroque castle [11]. Latest researches have shown, that the noble residence must have been developed from a former fortified house [2], [3] and [4]. Sources date the construction of the fortified house not before the 2nd half of the 15th century, when Hnojník became the demesne. We know neither the material nor the appearance of the original house. The stone fortified house might have been built even later. The lintel, used secondarily in the basement of the castle, looks like a renaissance jamb from the 16th century [3]. The neighbouring terrain might indicate, originally there had been a bailey. The only thing we are sure about is that in the neighbourhood of the castle there used to be much older buildings. Only an Archaeology survey could bring more findings about these older buildings as the part of the old area of the castle Hnojník.





**Fig. 11:** Hnojník, the neighbourhood of the castle, southern hornbeam avenue, photo, 2020

The latest investigations [4] suggest the fortified house had been rebuilt into the castle by Karl Free Lord von Bees between 1736–1751. Some of the iron bars in the windows bear the initials CFB. It means German *Carl Freiherr von Bees*, this is Carl Free Lord von Bees. After rebuilding the castle got today's ground plan and a rhythm of façades. The mass composition of those days can be seen on the postcard from 1899: the central part of the castle with 3 floors and an attic, The lateral parts with 2 floors had mansard roofs covered with shingles.

The 1st military survey from 1764–68 in view of a drawing of Hnojník brought a research problem. The castle is painted as a four-wing object [27]. This first military survey of the Austrian Monarchy was made only in the form of an observation not measurement, so called *à la vue*. In those maps there are a lot of mistakes. Drawing wrong number of wings especially in noble residences was very commonplace. E.g. a fortified house in Velká Polom had surely four wings in the 18th century. Unlike that, it is painted as 2 isolated objects on the 16th Silesian map from the 1st military survey [27]. The castle in Klimkovice is drawn as a two-wings building only on the 17th Silesian map [27], nevertheless we are completely sure, that the castle had four wings as early as in the 1760s.



**Fig. 12:** Castle Hnojník, the north façade, photo, 2020.

The neighbourhood of the castle was also landscaped into a garden, maybe (from the later sources) French formal garden, in the time of Karl Wenzel von Bees. From the south side there is a view of the hill Godula, accented presumably with the alley of low bushes in this time. The landscape adaptation into parks was very often in the Baroque period. These large landscape adaptations were in the neighbourhood of big castles, such as the Schliessheim in Bayern [6] or Gottdorf in Schleswig [7]. The garden in Kravaře, landscaped into a French formal garden, is drawn on a minutely described map from 1788. The landscape adaptations were frequent in neighbourhoods of small castles in villages as well. Alleys along access roads were commonplace, e.g. in Rychvald. In the garden in Kravaře there were a few alleys, too.



**Fig. 13:** Castle Hnojník, the west façade, photo, 2020.

Another source giving information on the evolution of the castle and its neighbourhood is a stable cadastre [28]. On the map from the year 1836 there is a farm eastwards from the castle; southwards, along both sides of the access road, a French formal garden with green squares can be seen.

That French formal garden was replaced with a landscape garden maybe in the 19th century [8]. The park was decorated with works of arts made from natural and manmade stone [3]. The road accessing the castle from the south was underlined with an alley of low bushes. This layout of this garden is drawn on the cadastral map from 1907 [3].





Fig. 14: Hnojník, aerial photo, 2020. [www.mapy.cz](http://www.mapy.cz)



Fig. 15: Castle Hnojník, the east façade, photo, 2020.

The timber roof truss of the castle was replaced in 1899 [12]. Dendrochronology dates for this timber roof truss are available [3]. Two historic postcards from 1899 show the shape of the castle before the rebuilding and after it. In the archive in Opava there is also a plan for rebuilding of the south façade. Both lateral parts of the castle had mansard roof (only with the lower inclination). The roof covering was also replaced. Shingle roof covering was substituted with slate one. Slate covering of two colours, dark and pale, was applied in order to decorate the roof with geometric ornaments.

Between 1899 and 1922 castle rebuilding had to be carried out. The façades were changed a bit, one floor was added in the east and west section, to be a three-storey building. The castle has also had sheet covering since then.

In the 2nd half of the 20th century there was only basic maintenance performed in the castle. In front of the south façade unsuitable hornbeam alley was planted. Since hornbeams grow to the height of a few meters, they block the view of the castle from south. The landscape garden was left unattended. The sculpture decorations were damaged, and some pieces were stolen.

## 5. Conclusion

The castle, formerly fortified house, in Hnojník, has been undoubtedly part of the manmade landscape in Těšín region since the 16th century. It was probably a dominant landscape feature from the origin. In the Baroque period the castle was accented as a noble residence in the garden. In the 1st half of the 19th century there was a French formal garden. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century the south access road to the castle underlined with a low bush alley. And the garden was transformed into a landscape garden.

The castle and its neighbourhood deteriorated for over than 20 years. The works of arts in the garden have been stolen. The hornbeams planted in front of the south façade have grown and block an important part of the cultural landscape – the view of the hill Godula from the castle. The contemporary owner PRIGO Group started renovation of the castle in 2020.



Fig. 16: Castle Hnojník, the east façade with a blind window, photo, 2020.

The castle and former fortified house has been important part of the cultural landscape since the early New Age. It has had decisive influence on the form of manmade landscape – municipality of Hnojník, especially since the garden was established.



Fig. 17: Castle Hnojník, the east façade, the blind window with the initials of CFB, photo, 2020.



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